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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN CHARGE EAGER TO SANCTION ERITREA; AGREES
TO CONSIDER NEW BORDER DISPUTE STRATEGY

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

1.(SBU) SUMMARY. During an August 13 meeting with Ambassador Rice, Ethiopian Charge Tessema discussed plans to work with IGAD this month to agree on the components of a new draft resolution sanctioning Eritrea for its actions in Somalia and Djibouti. Tessema does not view either China or Libya as obstacles to a new sanctions regime, stating that Libya would follow the rest of the Council if the resolution is based on the AU's declaration made in Sirte. Ambassador Rice urged Ethiopia to forge a new border demarcation plan, without preconditions on prior dialogue with Eritrea, stating that some Security Council members may wish to reference the dispute in a new sanctions resolution. Tessema initially protested this idea, stating that progress will be impossible without Eritrean buy-in, but warmed up to the plan after Ambassador Rice proposed that a third party could offer some legitimacy to the demarcation project. END SUMMARY.

Ethiopia Eyes New Sanctions Regime for Eritrea

¶2. (SBU) In an August 13 meeting with Ambassador Rice, Ethiopian Charge d'Affairs Ambassador Fesseha Tessema said he was encouraged by the African Union's recent call to sanction Eritrea for its support of armed opposition groups in Somalia and asked for U.S. "help and encouragement" in the creation of a new UNSC sanctions resolution. Tessema said that he expects Ugandan Permanent Representative Rugunda to take action on a new resolution in August or September after Djiboutian Permanent Representative Olhaye returns from his visit to the region. Ambassador Rice emphasized that any new sanctions resolution should be an Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiative led by Uganda in the Security Council. She recalled IGAD's prior lack of consensus on a sanctions framework for Eritrea during its June visit to New York, and stated that any new resolution should reflect the common ground between Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. Tessema assured Ambassador Rice that IGAD's product will be a joint effort, and noted that he expects negotiating instructions from his capital shortly.

¶3. (C) In response to Ambassador Rice's question about the position of China and Libya vis--vis sanctioning Eritrea, Tessema stated that China would not oppose the African Union's recommendation for new sanctions and that he also does not expect Libya to stand against a consolidated Security Council stance. On upcoming designations by the Somalia Sanctions Committee, Tessema stated that it is not the number of people, but rather the stature of the individual that is critical in making an impression with Eritrea. He assured Ambassador Rice that Libya would not oppose the listing of Eritrean Chief of Political Affairs Yemane Gebreab.

Ambassador Rice Urges Border Demarcation

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Rice lamented the lack of progress over the last nine years on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute while pressing Ethiopia to regain the "moral high ground" by presenting a new demarcation plan, stating that some Security Council members may wish to reference the dispute in a new sanctions resolution. Ambassador Rice said that by making progress on the border issue, Ethiopia would underscore its commitment to peaceful neighborly relations, placing the onus on Eritrea to take the next step. Tessema urged Ambassador Rice to avoid drawing a parallel between sanctioning Eritrea and resolving the border dispute, stating that Ethiopia has always been ready to engage, but Eritrea has refused dialogue. Tessema explained that without participation from Eritrea, complete border demarcation is impossible due to ambiguities created by the Border Commission's 2000 decision that must be jointly addressed.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Rice explained that Ethiopia's strategy of engaging Eritrea in dialogue is now dated due to its entrenched isolationist position. She emphasized that Ethiopia should instead create a new demarcation plan to address the border anomalies that does not require engagement with Eritrea. Tessema protested this plan, explaining that Ethiopia cannot legally move forward without, at a minimum, buy-in from a third party. Ambassador Rice suggested that the United Nations or another body could offer third party legitimacy to the project and could assist with the plan's mechanics. She noted that approximately ninety percent of the Border Commission's 2000 delimitation decision is

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uncontroversial with only ten percent, mainly in populated areas, more difficult to finalize. Ambassador Rice urged Ethiopia to address the border dispute without preconditions and think creatively on how they could move forward without an Eritrean partner in dialogue. Tessema promised to take this proposal back to Addis Ababa while reiterating that it would be best to separate the border dispute from the issue of sanctioning Eritrea.

RICE